

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4749

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY MADRAS

CONFIDENTIAL NEW DELHI 10075

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON THE SOVIET'S ASIAN
COLLECTIVE SECURITY PROPOSAL AND SOVIET PRESENCE
IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. THE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEBATE IN THE LOK
SABHA JULY 14, IN WHICH PRIME MINISTER DESAI REPLIED ON
BEHALF OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER:

A. QUESTION: "WHETHER SOVIET UNION HAS SPELT OUT HER IDEA
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OF ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN CLEAR TERMS" AND WHAT IS THE
GOI'S REACTION?

ANSWER: THE PM REPLIED THAT CONCRETE PROPOSALS HAD NOT
YET BEEN MADE. "IN OUR VIEW, IT IS FOR THE COUNTRIES OF THE
REGION TO DISCUSS VARIOUS IDEAS ON THE SUBJECT AND TO EVOLVE,
AFTER MUTUAL CONSULTATION, WAYS AND MEANS OF PROMOTING PEACE
AND STABILITY AND STRENGTHENING MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COOPER-

ATION ON BILATERAL AND REGIONAL BASIS." IN REPLY TO A FURTHER QUESTION, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID, "RUSSIA HAS NOT SPECIFIED WHAT EXACTLY THEY MEAN BY WHAT THEY ARE SAYING."

B. QUESTION: DID THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO INDIA RAISE THE ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY PROPOSAL?

ANSWER: "HE DID NOT MENTION IT EVEN BY A LONG FORK."(SIC)

C. QUESTION: WILL INDIA TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO RAISE THE QUESTION OF ARMS COMPETITION IN THE UN?

ANSWER: "BEFORE WE TAKE ANY INITIATIVE, WE SHOULD QUALIFY TO HAVE THE INITIATIVE WITH OUT STRENGTH....IN THIS MATTER, I HAVE NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT THERE CAN BE NO SECURITY IN ASIA OR THE WORLD AS LONG AS THERE ARE ATOMIC WEAPONS. THEREFORE, IT HAS BEEN OUR ATTEMPT CONSTANTLY TO SEE THAT THESE WEAPONS DISAPPEAR."

D. QUESTION: "IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THEY HAVE NO BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN OR IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD WHICH IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST THREATS TO THE ASIAN SECURITY AND ALSO, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATE IS PLANNING TO HAVE BASES IN ADDITION TO DIEGO GARCIA EVEN IN THE BAY OF BENGAL, IS THE GOVERNMENT DOING ANYTHING TO PROTEST AGAINST THIS ATTITUDE OF THE UNITED STATES IN ACCELERATING THE TENSION IN THIS

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REGION WHICH IS A THREAT TO THE ASIAN SECURITY?"

ANSWER: "FIRSTLY, THE HON. MEMBER IS WRONG IN STATING THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NO BASE WHATSOEVER. IT HAS ITS SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THAT CANNOT BE DENIED. IT IS A RACE BETWEEN THE TWO POWERFUL NATIONS. IT IS FROM THAT THAT WE HAVE TO SAVE ASIA. THAT IS WHAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN." END UNCLASSIFIED

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2. COMMENT: THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS "SPHERES OF INFLUENCE" IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND HIS TAKING EXCEPTION TO THE ASSERTION THAT THE "SOVIET UNION HAS NO BASE WHATSOEVER" MARK AN IMPORTANT DEPARTURE FROM THE USUAL GOI POSITION. HERETOFORE, THE INDIANS HAVE ACCEPTED AT FACE VALUE THE SOVIET DENIAL OF NOT HAVING ANY BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. ADDRESSEES SHOULD REALIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT WAS MADE EXTEMPORANEOUSLY IN ORAL DEBATE. WE SHOULD AWAIT REITERATION OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS BEFORE CONCLUDING THAT GOI POLICY IN THIS AREA HAS BEEN RADICALLY ALTERED.

GOHEEN

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